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upon by warring elements. The evolution of political life brought nations to the fore. Nationalistic particularism was transferred to religious differences. Here the antagonisms of creed were even more bitter than secular differences. The paradox of religious wars does not add loftiness to religious appraisal. Religion instead of a binding influence was a fruitful cause of discord in such a world-order. The close of the Middle Ages ushered in the dawn of a new era. The American and French revolutions proclaimed a universal message of freedom. This was a new urge toward brotherhood and democracy. The Republic of the West became an experimental melting-pot for the melting of undemocratic prejudices, with neither racial nor creedal privileges. The universal exposition held in London in 1851 was another move against national separateness. But Bismarck's blood-and-iron theory had still to become an actuality, and keep from fulfilment the prophetic and poetic dreams of world-brotherhood and world-federation. There were still remnants of religious massacre and persecution in various sections of the world. These and many other prejudicial differences brought on the nightmare of war that we have just passed through. In the midst of war horror are stories of fraternization of creed and race that relate

the breaking up of artificial differences and the discovery of fundamental hopes and unities. War has been the melting-pot of brotherhood. It has further tended to break down a particularistic nationalism.

Both Jews and Christians preach the universalism of their respective religions. Between the two there must be unity in spite of differences. In this realm there is no more need for a monotonous level of uniformity than in the field of nationality. Each people and each religion can present the richest fruitage of diverse genius. Leading humanity from the narrow grooves of nationality and creed is one of the specific tasks of religious educators. Paralleling the League of Nations a League of Religions is suggested. Jews, Catholics, and Protestants preach the one Father. Each can show brotherliness and co-operation by giving a religious appreciation of deeply religious and influential members of these different faiths. We have in mind such names as Florence Nightingale, Wilberforce, Francis d'Assisi, Father Damien, and Jews like Moses Montefiore and Maurice de Hirsch. A knowledge of the contribution of these great leaders by the young people would do much to enhance religious brotherhood and minimize man-made differences. It is possible to have both an international mind and an interreligious mind.

CHURCH EFFICIENCY

The Rediscovery of Christianity

The *Century* for October has an interesting and suggestive article on the present function of the church by Glenn Frank under the caption "The Rediscovery of Christianity." The writer aims to unite the personal and social emphasis of Christianity for the task of making bad men good and good men better. In times past, after an upheaval like the Great War, there has followed a revival of individualistic religion. Tired souls have taken refuge in the conso-

lations of an otherworldly type of religion. The war did not take away a large number of our youth nor leave us worn out by effort. The urge for the old type of revival is not present with us. The dramatic experience of the soldiers in the trenches will not give their post-war religion. It is borne on the flood of deeper currents—not doctrinal arguments, nor fear, but those essentials that have been justified in action, as a vicarious life for others and the social purposelessness of a sinful life. But these thoughts were

stirring in the minds of men before the war. They came out of the streams of thought known as philosophical and historical criticism, the doctrine of evolution, and the democratic movement. This movement is not an eddy but a major current and stands in the way of reactionary individualistic religion. No doubt the tradition-bound minds of thousands of clergymen will seize the war-weary mood of the world to revive such a type of religion. But normal and healthy minds will rise to a larger religious vision.

The task that confronts the church is the effective co-ordination of the so-called "spiritual" and "social" gospels if it has been possible to think of them as artificially separate. Progress follows a zigzag course: "One generation lays an extreme emphasis upon one phase of social, economic, or religious truth. The next generation lays an equally extreme emphasis upon another phase of truth. Genuine progress is realized when a third generation brings the two extremes together into a co-ordinated program of forward-looking action." It is now vital that we socialize our religious program and spiritualize our social program. Otherwise we have devotion and dividends in two distinct worlds.

This social phase of a truly spiritual religion is not a new thing but a "rediscovery." Christianity has been socially denatured. The ethical ideals of the great prophets are reflected in a large measure in the teachings of Jesus. He spoke to the soul and society. It has been a tragedy that these two aspects of a living whole have been artificially separated in the development of Christian institutions. The theological schools in a united program might greatly aid religious and social progress by a nation-wide program of extension institutes to form a meeting ground under informed leadership of the ministry from all sections of our national life to consider the question of finding "the sanest and most compelling statement of the church's mes-

sage, a statement that will neither turn the church into the retreat of the mystic nor make it merely the reform club of the radical, but the effective carrier of the full message of the carpenter of Nazareth, who spoke alike to the soul and to society." Many have said that the church will be untrue to its peculiar function if it attempts to influence directly social institutions. Its task is to preach private and personal virtues. It is becoming increasingly felt that it is not enough to let social morality be a mere product of private virtue. The age challenges the church to be in the forefront in the discovery of both private and public morality. This social dynamite was implicit and explicit in the spiritual message of Jesus. The rigid conservatives of his time soon recognized it. This has been smoothed over and lost sight of in so much of our public life. The church is rediscovering its task as a whole:

It is not the function of the church to organize political parties and devise the machinery of social and economic progress. The church should be the inspirer rather than the organizer of social progress. The church is obliged to maintain a continuous moral analysis of the existing order, standards, and practices of society in all its fields of action.

There is no more effective pulpit to announce the "social gospel" than the headship of big business. There quietly and effectively Christian laymen will build the Master's principles of justice, love, and service into industry and preach through the contagion of example. The church must inspire this sort of action.

The Rural Church and Christian Union

Alva W. Taylor in the *Christian Union Quarterly* for October asks: "Have we pursued creed, loyalty to denomination, multiplied churches, and invested in traditional interpretations of the Gospel till

we have injured its effectiveness and neglected the Gospel itself?" There is much evidence that in the rural field—the bulwark of democratic Christianity in America—we have been pursuing a shortsighted program. The extreme individualism, the product of the democratic revolution, is being rapidly socialized by mechanical and institutional agencies, but there is grave danger that the church will be the laggard in this socialization.

Careful surveys of recent date in several states have revealed the evil of over-churching, resulting in waste and inefficiency. The survey in Ohio and Missouri, covering 10,000 churches, shows that an organization and a building is found for every six square miles. If there was one for every seven miles square, few would be four miles from a church house and the reduction would be to one-eighth of the present number. One-sixth the number would give approximate easy walking distance to Sunday school for every country child in the nation. Of the foregoing churches more than 90 per cent have no pastoral oversight and fully 95 per cent are without resident ministers. The lack of acute temptations in rural life is the only saving grace in the situation. These churches were established by valiant men in days when creedal loyalty stood for religious zeal. They did not merely seek out unchurched settlements in the pioneer days, but sought to put a church of their persuasion in every settlement. This method of safeguarding the cause of religious liberty was inevitable in the ferment of ideas and forces of the time. It was inevitable that there should be much waste as the price of progress in an uncharted land. Yet, while these denominational divisions were inevitable in winning individual rights in worship, it is not inevitable that they continue forever. While we owe a great debt to each of the denominations,

the contribution of each is now the common property of all. We are all as free as the Baptists and Congregationalists, as devout as Wesleyans, as orthodox about the regnancy of God as the Presbyterians, and we are all rapidly becoming as efficient in our polity as the Methodists and Episcopalians, and seek to stand as loyally on Scripture as the Disciples. As the fathers dared in the cause of individual liberty, we may now venture in the new era of co-operative efficiency. The lesson of the war can become the lesson of the churches of Christ.

In the rural field the surveys reveal that in those churches under 50 members, only 17 per cent made progress, while in those of more than 200 members, 79 per cent made progress, and the scale increased from the church of 50 to that of 300 in fairly uniform proportion. Similar findings have come from the Presbyterian and Methodist surveys in Canada. Less than 40 per cent of the rural churches are making progress and a like proportion are unmistakably dying. Often whole communities are left without a virile church, and communities are threatened with moral deterioration and an emasculated Christianity.

Men and women are loyal to traditional loyalties. A doctrinaire program for ideal union will not solve the problem. While it will not do to sacrifice conviction or loyalty to historic organizations, we can enlarge them by directing them into organizations that embody fundamental loyalties. The spirit of co-operation is becoming more and more patent, but organic union is possible in only an occasional case under existing conditions. This is a stubborn fact. The federated church seems to be the present solution of over-churching and the hope of the rural community in guiding the process of socialization. It makes possible a large and efficient program while retaining loyal relationships with respective denominations and conventions.